

# **NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Block Island School**

**September 19, 2006**

**(Rescheduled from September 18, 2006)**

**7:00 P.M.**

**The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Tuesday, September 19, 2006, in the media center of the Block Island School. Chair William Padien called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M. The following members were present: Shea Butcher, Annie Hall, Sean McGarry, William Padien, and Richard Tretheway. Leslie Ryan was also in attendance.**

## **Approval of Minutes**

**A motion (Hall, Butcher) to approve the open session minutes of the meetings held on August 14, 21, and 28, 2006, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.**

**A motion (Hall, Padien) to approve the executive session minutes of August 21 and 28, 2006, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.**

## **Reports**

**Nancy Cole reported on the un-audited standing of accounts as of June 30 and July 31, 2006. She stated that bills continue to come in for last fiscal year, but the money from the sale of the administrative**

trailer and the portable classrooms is being used to offset some of those expenses. She reminded committee members that all numbers are subject to change until the audit has been completed.

Sean McGarry reported that the superintendent selection committee met to review the five applications received and found two candidates they would like to interview. However, before these candidates were contacted Mr. McGarry called Paul Pontarelli at RIDE for advice. He explained to him that Leslie Ryan had been hired as the acting superintendent and had been given a one-year contract. He further explained that we are in a transition period and had not decided whether we wanted/needed a full-time or part-time superintendent. Mr. Pontarelli stated that we should not be forced into hiring just anyone, but be able to find the right person for the position. As long as what we are doing does not send up any “red flags” he is satisfied that we are working to fill the permanent position and should not waste time finding someone to work the remainder of this year, especially when Mrs. Ryan will be fully certified in December. A motion (Padien, Hall) to dissolve the current superintendent selection committee, send out appropriate letters to the five applicants, and form a new superintendent search committee at next month’s meeting carried with a vote of 5-0.

William Padien reported that Marc Tillson had sent a letter to Saccoccio & Associates on September 5 explaining that the only way we could open school would be with a “fire watch” until the sprinkler

system could be tested. We are now in full compliance with the sprinkler and fire alarm systems. Mr. Padien expects the remaining construction to be completed sometime this fall and the parking lot should be done in a week or two. ADA compliance requires a walkway or sidewalk from the parking lot to the gym entrance and there are other ADA issues that need to be addressed in the tech ed room/shop. The dust collector system has arrived and once it has been installed the tech ed room will be complete. The curtains for the music classroom were shipped yesterday.

Marlee Lacoste reported on the following:

- We are now into the third week of school and only a few scheduling conflicts/issues need to be resolved.
- Today was picture day and the students looked great.
- Drop-off/pick-up and bus issues are working themselves out. Tom Durden was a substitute bus driver when Howie Rice was hospitalized, but it is great to have Mr. Rice back in the driver's seat.
- Patty Tretheway has volunteered to work the lunch register one day per week. Several others may be available later this fall.
- Seniors are starting to talk with David Stephenson about SATs and colleges. A representative from the College Planning Service will speak to parents and students about financial aid and the college application process in November.
- Kristine Monje has received the testing materials for the state assessments, which will be given the first three weeks of October. Grades 3-8 will be tested in English/language arts and math.

**Students in grades 5 and 8 will also be tested in writing. Grades 10 and 11 will take the PSATs on October 18.**

- A community member has expressed interest in donating \$3000 for the purchase of sports uniforms. Now that we have some decent storage space a more thorough inventory can be done to assess what we currently have. Upcoming numbers of students will also be factored in when making a plan to purchase uniforms.**

**Mrs. Ryan stated that it is great to be here in the capacity of superintendent. We had a good start to the school year and a Back to School Night and Community Open House is being planned for Wednesday, September 27. This will be a chance to visit the classrooms, but not for individual conferences with teachers.**

**Mrs. Ryan reported that she is submitting a grant in hopes of receiving funds to embed arts through our extra-curricular activities. She also mentioned that on October 20 Mr. McGarry has arranged for resource management representatives to present a recycling program. She would like Block Island School to take advantage of more of these types of programs or assemblies to access some of the good things out there.**

### **Old Business**

**Mrs. Ryan reported that in the absence of an athletic director a system has been in place to allow two School Committee members to schedule soccer and basketball games. Lynne Cunningham has been**

responsible for the clerical piece. All information has passed through Mrs. Ryan's desk because the superintendent is "responsible" for the athletic program in the absence of an AD. There has been a lot of discussion around this issue and just prior to the meeting Mrs. Ryan was handed a petition signed by 39 students requesting that Matthew Morn be considered for the AD position. Interviews have been scheduled for next week. Mrs. Ryan gave kudos to those who have been putting in time to make the sports program work. Richard Tretheway reported that an article had appeared in the Block Island Times explaining what it entails to be a coach. He would like to see each team have a coach, assistant coach, and two helpers. All would need to be certified, including the helpers, as procedures require two certified coaches to travel with our teams and it is sometimes difficult to arrange schedules so that both coaches are available. Mrs. Lacoste gave kudos to Mr. McGarry for the work he has been doing in scheduling the soccer games. She explained that soccer is the easiest season and time of year for scheduling, but basketball has four teams and a not very user-friendly boat schedule. He feels that it would be much better to have an AD based here at the school.

At the August 14 School Committee meeting a motion was approved to establish a School Improvement Team and to appoint specific individuals at this evening's meeting. The SIT would be an advisory committee and consist of 16 members including the Superintendent, Facilitator, K-4, 5-7, and 8-12 Coordinators, elementary parent, secondary parent, two teachers, two students, special education

representative, member of the support staff, School Committee member, and two members of the public. Mrs. Ryan suggested a name change from SIT to SMART (School Movement and Response Team). Faculty members reiterated that they had voted earlier this year to continue with some form of site based management, but with revisions. The School Committee has had several work sessions to discuss the restructuring of the site based management plan as it currently exists at the Block Island School. A lengthy discussion was held on whether the SIT/SMART would be a management or advisory team and if it were to replace or work in conjunction with the Core Team. Faculty members in the audience voiced concern about a team of parents, educators, and students managing the school on a daily basis. It was felt that they could work to develop visions and make suggestions, but this is different than management. School Committee members felt that the SIT/SMART would be implemented this year to co-exist with the Core Team and help to tweak the system to define how the management system would work in our school. Due to all of the confusion on this topic it was suggested that this item be tabled. A motion (Padien, Hall) to table the appointment of School Improvement Team members until next month's meeting carried with a vote of 5-0.

### **New Business**

A discussion was held on the possibility of amending Policy ID: Extra Curricular/Athletic Participation, which was changed last December and denies eligibility to students who fail one course.

Prior to this change students could still participate if they failed one course. Mrs. Ryan submitted some questions to guide the discussion, including whether an average could be considered instead of a single failing grade; if there is an alternate recourse for lack of academic commitment; could a student practice, but not play, or would this make coaching a team too difficult; and what supports for improving achievement can be put in place. Mrs. Ryan suggested that an action plan be included with all progress reports where students are having difficulties or in danger of failing one or more courses. It was explained that the policy was sent home to parents last year and all the students were aware of it because several students experienced it last year. Some parents felt that the policy is too extreme, leaving students with nothing to do and no social life. Faculty members stated that a lot of time was put into developing this policy because student athletes miss a great deal of school to attend off island games. The idea behind the policy was not to be punitive, but to stress to students that school is important. It was felt that more time should be given to the policy to see if it is effective. Some students have improved academically so they can participate in sports. School Committee members stated they were supportive of the teachers and what they were trying to achieve. If the policy were to change it still wouldn't go into effect for several months. It was suggested that homework clubs and tutors be mandatory for students in danger of failing. If the student does not take advantage of the extra help he or she would then be excluded from the team. Mr. Padien read a letter from Jiff Blansfield into the record (see attached),

**which requests some compromise to the policy. Mrs. Ryan will have more discussions with the faculty before a final decision is made regarding this policy.**

**Notification was received from Howard Rice that he would like to amend the bus contract to accommodate a second bus to carry the additional children riding this year. A motion (Padien, Hall) to table this agenda item until Mrs. Ryan has a chance to contact Mr. Rice to see what he is proposing for a new bus contract and for the School Committee to do the same carried with a vote of 5-0.**

**A motion (Padien, Butcher) to consent to the appointment of Laura Lehrman as the clinical social worker one day per week carried with a vote of 5-0.**

**A motion (Padien, Butcher) to consent to the appointment of Kate Mello as a teacher assistant carried with a vote of 5-0.**

**A motion (Padien, Butcher) to consent to the appointment of Rob Closter as the long-term substitute for John Tarbox carried with a vote of 5-0.**

**A motion (Hall, Butcher) to consent to the appointment of Cristina Gil, Christina Hundt, Shannon McCabe, and April Pila as the bus monitors for the 2006-07 school year carried with a vote of 5-0.**



**Tuition reimbursement requests were received from Victoria Carson and Shannon Cotter. Mrs. Lacoste explained that quite a bit of professional development grant funds have been received and suggested that this money be used before tapping the amount in the general operating budget. A motion (Padien, Hall) to approve the tuition reimbursement request pursuant to the terms and conditions of the School Committee/Teachers' Contract was withdrawn with the understanding that this would be addressed by grant money.**

**A request for additional compensation was received from Jack Lyle for the days he worked after the close of the August 19, 2006, pay period. It was suggested that this item be addressed by our attorney. However, committee members felt that would cost more to have it addressed by legal counsel than the requested compensation. A motion (Padien, Hall) to table Jack Lyle's request for additional compensation indefinitely carried with a vote of 5-0.**

**A self-assessment developed by the Rhode Island Association of School Committees was submitted for School Committee review. It was suggested that a work session be scheduled to address the results of the self-assessment. A motion (Padien, Hall) to have each member fill out a self-evaluation form and return it within two weeks so that the administrative assistant and the superintendent can gather the pertinent information and generate a report for the school committee carried with a vote of 5-0.**

## **Calendar of Events**

**An interim meeting has been scheduled for 2:30 P.M. on Thursday, October 5. The next regular meeting was moved from Monday, October 16 to Tuesday, October 17.**

## **Correspondence**

**Various pieces of correspondence were forwarded for School Committee information.**

## **Executive Session**

**A motion (Padien, Hall) at 10:15 P.M. to go into executive session pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws 42-46-4, 5(a)(2) for a discussion on contract negotiations carried with a vote of 5-0.**

## **Open Session**

**A motion (Padien, Butcher) at 10:40 P.M. to return to open session carried with a vote of 5-0.**

**A motion (Padien, Butcher) to seal the minutes of the executive session carried with a vote of 5-0.**

## **Adjournment**

**A motion (Butcher, Padien) at 10:40 P.M. to adjourn carried with a vote of 5-0.**

**Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk**

**Date approved: 10/17/2006**